(a) whether Government are aware that the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) has increased the rates of certain tests conducted at the Institute and also the rent of ICU;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the reasons for increasing the rates of various tests and the rent for ICU;

(d) whether Government propose to ask the AIIMS to review this increase and roll back to previous position in view of resistance from the general public; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILTY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (e) The All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), has reviewed and rationalized the rates after a long gap of 12 years, after due consultations at various levels including the AIIMS faculty and appropriate statutory bodies. The rationalization of charges includes introduction of several new diagnostic procedures, upward and downward revision of charges. Charges of over 450 diagnostic procedures have not been revised. Even after the revision of charges, the poor patients will continue to get free treatment as hitherto. Besides, all patinents admitted in the causalty, irrespective of their economic status, will continue to get free treatment. There is no change in this provision.

Reducing prices of foodgrains

*458. SHRI MATILAL SARKAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have made any assessment of the prices of foodgrains in the open market and in the fair price shops for the same quality;

(b) if so, the results thereof;

(c) whether Government are going to reduce the prices of foodgrains as allotted to the BPL and APL families to make it effectively affordable; and

(d) the details of the steps in the pipeline, if any?

THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI SHARAD PAWAR): (a) and (b) Issue prices fixed by the State Governments/UTs at the Fair Prices Shop level in respect of wheat, vary between Rs. 2.00 to Rs. 7.50 per kg. in respect of families living below the poverty line (BPL). In respect of families above the poverty line (APL), it ranges between Rs. 5.22 to Rs. 7.50 per kg. Issue prices for rice vary between Rs. 3.00 to Rs. 7.00 per kg in respect of BPL families and Rs. 7.45 to Rs. 10.00 per. kg. for APL families.

The open market prices of wheat of comparable quality range between Rs. 7.00 to Rs. 14.50 per kg. In respect of rice the prices in the open market vary between Rs. 9.25 per kg. to Rs. 16 per kg.

(c) No, Sir.

(d) Does not arise.

Outbreak of coxsackie virus

*459. SHRI RAVULA CHANDRA SEKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether at least 40 children have died and hundreds more are pouring into hospitals in Gorakhpur in an outbreak of Coxsackie, a deadly virus which leaves children with weeks of high fever, fits and diarrhoea;

(b) if so, the details of such children died so far;

(c) whether Government had appointed any committee to look into this;

(d) if so, the details thereof;

(e) the recommendations received so far; and

(f) the action taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (DR. ANBUMANI RAMADOSS): (a) to (f) An outbreak of encephalitis occurred in seven districts of eastern Uttar Pradesh since the last week of July this year. The outbreak was investigated by National Institute of Communicable Diseases and was confirmed as due to Japanese Encephalitis. However, in some sections of the media it was suspected that the cause of encephalitis among children in Gorakhpur is the Coxsachie virus outbreak.